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ABSTRACT

This collection of materials is designed to assist elementary school teachers in understanding and exploring the experiential world of the elementary school student by describing what students are like and examining their perceptions of settings, events, and other school members. The following concepts are addressed: (1) cognitive abilities of students; (2) success factors affected by supervised and unsupervised conditions; (3) adaptive behaviors; and (4) labeling of students by themselves and their peers. Numerous examples are included which speak to stereotyping, labeling, classroom behaviors, and lesson performance on the part of the students. (Author/HLM)

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Elementary Studentship: Toward an Understanding

Gary G. deVoss

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Elementary Studentship: Toward an Understanding

Gary G. deVoss

This paper takes its direction from two sources, an ethnography of Subanun religious practices done by Frake in 1964, and a study of the correspondences among the daily meals of working British families done by Mary Douglas in 1974. Both these sources have aspects in common that make them ideal referents. First, each uses a crucially "suitable" approach-for-examining certain aspects of everyday life. Second, each manages to discover a completely unexpected phenomenon within a mundane setting. Third, each study is able to leap beyond the topic at hand and bring fresh insight to a set of wider issues.

Keeping these three criteria in mind, this paper is meant to be an excursion into elementary student life. The first part concerns itself with elementary students' perceptions of others in the setting. The second part describes a small segment of the daily routine, a major lesson.

The primary purpose of this paper is not descriptive but is to introduce a set of exploratory ethnographic hypotheses that attempt to explain a part of the elementary student ethos. (Ethnographic hypothesis is defined as a hypothesis or "heuristic maxim" (Overholt & Stallings, 1976, p. 15) proposed to explain a set of problematic facts or

surprising phenomena found to exist after a series of ethnographic observations are made within a specific culture.)

Two surprising phenomena (dealing with major lessons and student labeling habits) will be described briefly in this paper. The first observation is that students' interaction with their classmates is based on stereotypical labeling practices. This results in interaction that is ritualistic, impersonal, and space-time bound. Second is the observation that students purposely and consistently manage the institutional structure of school, but expecially the internal structure of event segments I call scenes (after Frake,1964), so as to extract maximum benefit for themselves (by benefit I do not mean learning).

I propose three ethnographic hypotheses that may reasonably be used to explain these phenomena as adaptive student pre-action rather than maladaptive re-action to the school context. These hypotheses will be briefly described here to give the reader some idea of how to view the next two sections on student labeling and major lesson perception. These ethnographic hypotheses will then be taken up again in detail at the end of the paper.

The first hypothesis is that students are able to link events together cognitively. Recognizing that desired scenes have prerequisites well within their control they collectively work to satisfy these prerequisites and thus bring about expected scenes rather than face unknown ones.

The second hypothesis is that students' main goal is to maximize personal worth, i.e., achieve success as an individual in context. There are two conditions at school that students recognize: supervised (under surveillance) conditions and un-

supervised conditions. The second hypothesis, then, is that if conditions are of the supervised type , such as a traditional major lesson might be considered, students use one set of strategies and actions, which I call the collective anonymity and the minimize unexpected events strategies. If conditions are of the unsupervised type, students employ another set of decision-strategy-action sequences.

The third ethnographic hypothesis is that student actions, speech included, are a reflection of their attempt to employ appropriate, adaptive behavior. This means only that student behavior is sensible to students (although often it is not to adults) and that their speech reflects this attempt to act purposively and adaptively.

What this says is if one wishes to understand elementary students one must keep the perceived conditions in mind as one tries to sort out the meaning of different student actions. Before these hypotheses are elaborated the sets of ethnographic observations regarding stereotyped conceptions and major lessons will be presented.

Methodology has been relegated to an appendix at the end of this paper. As many field note segments as possible, (given space limitations), are included in the text.

Student Stereotypes

How do students deal with classmates and how do these dealings act reflexively to shape future dealings? What follows are 59 labeling categories students use to systematize their daily interactions.

Legends are: asterisks* for labels I had to coin to represent a category, parentheses ( ) for labels actually stated by students. Following the label are three numbers: the first number gives the number of students mentioned for each label, the second number gives the total for how many students made a comment that fit under the label, and the third number tells whether the label was used in one of two grades, first-grade or fifth-grade, or both. Following these three items, a definition of the stereotype is given in one of two ways. For a few items an approximate gloss is rendered; in every item student verbatim descriptions are given for each item. Here is a complete example for the first label, *ABSENTEE:

*ABSENTEE: 2, 7, both. (i.e., seven respondents in both first and fifth-grade mentioned two persons.) Mam: (i.e., a male student named Marvin) 1) he used to be not here; he's not here, he's probably sick (i.e., one description of Marvin) 2) he never comes, he doesn't come and he doesn't want to; Mrs. T has to sometimes call the office and tell them to get him over here (i.e., a second description) 3) he misses too much school; Kif: (i.e., the student Kitrina) 1) she must like being sick, cause she's most of the time home sick 2) she's usually sick a lot. (for Mam, there are three respondents, 1), 2), and 3); for Kif, there are two respondents.

Only one label lists all responses made in the category, *UNTOUCHABLE. All others contain only selected descriptions.

*ABSENTEE 2,7,1st. Mam: 1) he used to be not here; he's not here, he's probably sick 2) he's been far away; he's been around the world, he never comes cause he's around the world 3) he never comes, he doesn't come and he doesn't want to come: Mrs. A. has to sometimes call the office and tell them to get him over here.

(ARTIST) 8,9,both. Jim: 1) he's a good drawer: he teaches me how to draw; he draws good: he draws planes good 2) he's a good artist 3) he's an artist. Stf: 1) she draws almost perfect 2) she draws good and writes good cursive.

*ATHLETE 7,22,both. Jum: 1) plays soccer good. Mam: 1) can do things like jump rope; high jump, do high hurdles 2) he's a really good soccer player. Jom: 1) about the best kicker in our class; a fast runner; he likes to play nationball and kickball.

(BADDEST) 2,2,1st. Mam: 1) is the baddest one in the class; he chews gum in class; says bad words to Mrs. T.; I couldn't tell you all the things that he does. Kef: 1) she's badder than J. and she says the F word and stuff.

(BRAT) 2,1,5th. Krf: 1) is a brat; always talks and stuff; does her work wrong; hardly ever turns it in right. Clm: sort of a brat; always goofs off in class; runs around and stuff.

*BUGGER 10,6,both. Grm: 1) him (and his friends) bug me at recess. Ram: 1) he goes "ooh-ooh-ga" in your ear; shouts in your ear. Saf: 1) really bugs me cause she'll come by and go "BEEP" (makes hitting motion); laughs at people. Krf: 1) she sort of bugs you; she always goes "woof-arf-arf" and stuff; it bugs me.

*CLUMSELY 3,3,both. Mam: 1) he's kind of a fall guy; he had a broken arm a few times. Shf: 1) has this weird way of walking like (demonstrates). Mef: 1) always goes like this: (makes a strange facial motion) 2) she runs kind of weird.

(COOL) 2,1,1st. Elm: 1) thinks he's cool but he's not. Edm: 1) thinks he's cool, but he can't even hit em (other kids in the class) in the face; all the kids trip him.

*COPIER 4,7,both. A student who gains a reputation for copying.
Lyf: 1) she has a habit of copying people, she still copies me and K. Tom: 1) he always copies K;(during tests) he writes down what K writes down. Kem: 1) never copies.

(CRYBABY) 6,4,1st. Nif: 1) she's somebody that cries all the time cause eb beats her up 2) she cries all the time cause eb calls her names 3) they make her cry and stuff. Edm: always yelling and screamin out and cryin, a big crybaby; just touch him and he starts cryin.

(CUSSER) 11,4,both Kef: 1) says the F word a lot; says bad words to Mrs. T. Saf: 1) I don't like the words she says 2) cusses a lot; always says "Busted" when Tony does cusses like E. ; she learned that from E.; she used to be very nice before she met E. (*and learned to cuss). Mef: 1) never says bad words.

*CRUEL 9,11,both Student who cruelly uses another student's handicap or disability to raise own status.
Def: 1) rude. She always hits people. Clm: 1) I don't like that much. Teases people and stuff. Jom: 1) goes around and makes fun of people. Krf: 1) calls people names.

*DEPENDENT 6,8,both A. Other students have to always help on work; B. a student who has a "godfather" in the class.
Trf: 1) (if) she doesn't understand what we're doing I helped her out. Nif: 1) if she needs help on something I would help her on math and stuff. Tif: 1)Kerry beats up people who beat up Tif 2) Tif is always crying, Kerry always has to take care of her 3) Kef protects Tif Tif can't fight her own battles Gaston got mad at Tif, and then Tif went to tell Junior, Junior protects Tif, too. Mef: 1)sometimes she goes, "Is this right?", "Is that how you do it?d (see bugger).

*DIFFERENT 6,3,both A student described as totally different in class than out of class.
Crm: 1) he's different at different times, sometimes he's nice. Chm: 1) he's quiet, in the class he is, and then outside, he's not 2) quiet, not at recess, though; *screams at recess, but in class you can't even hear him, he has to keep repeating it until you finally catch on to what he's saying.

(DUMB) 6,3,both. A. dislike B. not smart.
Def: A1) I hate her; she always hits me. Shf: A1) (cause I can beat her up); cause she always says, "Oh-oh, I can beat you up...". Bef: B1) cause she brung a bike to school and didn't even lock it up... Taf: B1) not very smart.

*EXCUSE MAKER 3,4,5th. Saf: 1) she likes losing things; * makes excuses for not bringing in papers; says "oh, you didn't give me one..." 2) she forgets in math. Shf: 1) she always forgets stuff; she hardly ever remembers to do her math; she always leaves it at home 2) uses lot of excuses and stuff

to have all her work not finished, like "oh, I left it at home..." or " I lost it...:; she never does any of the stuff at school; she likes to take it home because then she has an excuse if she doesn't finish it. Ram: 1) he's another one who has excuses for not finishing his work; he just happens to forget to bring things in.

(FIGHTER) 6,9,both. Mam: 1) the toughest kid in our whole class; goes beatin' up people who beat him up. 2) when he comes in he fights a lot 3) me and him fight a lot 4) can beat up on people in our class. Mef: 1) she doesn't like to fight. Kif: 1) she doesn't like to fight. Shf: 1) she is the fighting type! She says, "C'mon, I'll take you on...".

(FRIEND) 20,13,both. Jum: 1) I want him for a friend. Elm: 1) he's a good friend of mine. Nif: 1) she's one of my supergood friends... Trf: 1) one of my best friends.

*FUTURE TEACHER 3,5,5th. Kif: 1) a person, I can tell, who likes kids, cause she volunteers with the kindergarteners. Kaf: 1) she wants to be a teacher 2) she said, "Oh, I want to be a teacher so bad! ", I said, "Sure you do, cause you act like it!". Elf: 1) I want to be a kindergarten teacher; I just want to be a kindergarten teacher because I like little kids.

(GROSS) 2,2,both. Ber: 1) gross, she's gross. Shf: 1) all boys think of her as "a gross"; (she and her friends), they're ugly, stuff like that.

*HELPER-S 6,7,both. A student who offers assistance to others; the complement of DEP.
Jim: 1) he teaches me how to draw. Elm: 1) helps me on my work. Bef: 1) sometimes she helps me get my stuff in class. Shf: she helps me with my math; she helps me on pretests; she plays games with me. Stf: 1) whenever I need help she's always there.

*HELPER-T 5,7,5th. A student who (a) passes out dittoes or paper (b) turns lights on or off (c) provides other assistance to the teacher.
Stf: 1) she did help the teacher, she helped with that program... 2) some people think she's a pet to Mrs. T; she helps Mrs. T a lot 3) helps the teacher a lot 4) she stays in a lot and helps grade papers and that kind of stuff...

*HIAC 6,19,both. High academic.
Jim: 1) really a good student, in class 2) whenever he got free time he practices his times; knows all his times. Shf: 1) so smart; I like playing with her cause she's so smart 2) smart; writes good 3) smart a lot 4) always gets her work in on time.

(HOT) 5,4,both. Def: 1) she thinks she's so hot; like she beats up people and she calls other people names. Gam: 1) he thinks he's all hot, but he still plays with me.

(IMMATURE) 4,4,both. Tom: 1) sort of loud in class and always throwing pillows around 2) does immature kind of stuff, like changing jackets with Ram. 1) Stf: 1) strange; weird; sings this song all the time, "Mr. Potato Head"...acts like a baby some times...

*INDIFF 29,17,both. A student whom others have no knowledge of or no interest in (indifferent).
Gef: I don't know her too much 2) I never see what Gef does 3) I don't have nothin' to do with her 4) I don't know nothin' on her; I never know where she is.

*INVISIBLE 3,9,both. A student who is easily overlooked for long periods of time by other students.
Shf: 1) she's superquiet; you don't even know she's there 2) she just bes quiet and does nothin'; she just sits there doin' no work and quiet.

*JOCK 2,3,5th. Students who dominate peers (a) on the PE field; (b) in discussion situations.
Crm: 1) he never gives up the ball during dodgeball 2) he's always the boss on our team. Jom: thinks hes the fastest runner in the whole school but he's not, he acts all bigshot and everything.

(JOKER) 3,2,5th. Clm: he likes telling jokes. Elf: 1) she's so funny, at recess she always tells jokes and stuff.

*LONER 2,2,5th. Shf: 1) she likes getting the balls (from the ball-basket); she just carries the balls around; she just walks around (alone) on the field. Mef: 1) I don't associate with her, not many of the kids do... Shf: 1) she's so quiet, she never goes outside; she never does do the recesses.

*LOWAC 2,2,5th. Low academically.
Taf: 1) not very smart, she's kind of dumb. Kif: 1) she has to go to this lady during my teacher's reading.

(MGM) 4,4,5th. In the mentally gifted program.
Shf: 1) she goes to MGM. Tom, Shf, Grm: 1) they go to MGM with me. Kem: 1) he's in my MGM class.

*MANIPULATOR 2,2,5th. Shf: 1) she'll hit you then she'll apologize. Saf: 1) she bugs me...except she can be nice if she wants to...

(MODEL) 2,1,5th. Shf: 1) she is like a schoolgirl you'd see in the movies; it's schoolgirl facts-glasses, straight hair, wears dresses a lot, those short socks; she's so smart, too.

(MONITOR) 2,2,5th. Trf: 1) checks books out; if you check books out you have to go to her. Frf: 1) when she was monitor she didn't like it; she would only get up once a day to get paper for the table (paraphrase); she didn't like getting up to get that paper.

(MOTHER-HEN-OF-CLASS) 1,3,5th. Daf: she always tells people what to do; she acts like the mother hen of the classroom. 2) nice, but she acts like a mother; always tries to play teacher, asks if I need help when I don't (paraphrase).

(OBNOXIOUS) 2,1,5th. Saf: 1) she's sort of obnoxious. Krf: 1) kind of like Taf; she's really obnoxious a lot, you know.

(PEST) 6,5,both. Clm: 1) about the biggest pest in our class; he pesters everybody. Saf: 1) a pest, whe really bugs me because she comes by and goes "BEEP"...Tom: 1) a pest; a person you wouldn't want to be around for 24 hours a day; he just makes you so...(makes a disgusted, throwing-up motion).

*PRESENTER 3,7,both. Mam: 1) Well, he brings stuff to school 2) he makes magic tricks and stuff like that. Crm: 1) he makes a lot of (oral) reports and things.

*PRIVELEGE 1,4,5th. Shf: 1) during math she gets to go to Mr. T's class 2) she's polite, but sometimes she gets a little out of hand; she gets into line anyplace she wants because she's the principal's daughter; she gets to go to the sixth-grade math class 3) you'll say something wrong to her and she'll say, "Oh, I'll tell my dad."

(QUIET) 5,15,both. Shf: 1) she's quiet, superquiet; she really doesn't hardly ever talk 2) she never talks 3) quiet most of the time; when the year started she wouldn't even talk. Chm: 1) quiet; in class you can't ever hear him 2) quiet; I mean <u>quiet</u>! him and Lef would make a good pair because he's so quiet.

(READER) 4,7,both. Ref: 1) she always likes stories; she likes reading books all the time 2) she likes to read books. Lyf: she loves reading; she's read almost every horse book in the whole library; she has lists and lists of horse books she's read 2) likes to read a lot 3) likes to read 4) I love to read (Lyf speaking of herself).

*REJECT-S 8,15,both. A student who is rejected but not picked on by others in the class.
Jam: 1) he's always following me; I always tell him to get out of here. Shf: 1) usually I don't play with her. Mam: 1) he always follows me and I tell him to go away but he don't want to. Mef: 1) she's not been totally a class favorite; most of the kids don't like her very much; I don't go out of my way to tease her or anything, but I just don't associate, not many of the kids do...

(ROWDY) 7.3.both. Jum: 1) he's kind of rowdy; he fights, trips. Gam: 1) he's really rowdy; he's the rowdiest one in the class; cause he talks back to teachers.

(SHY) 3,2,5th. Apf: 1) sort of shy;she don't act like it but she is. Lef: 1) she's sort of quiet and shy, really nice.

(SICK) 2,2,both. Kif: 1) she likes being sick or something; she's most of the time sick.

(SMACK) 4,8,both. A term coined by students to describe another student who is smart; tinged with sarcasm.
Stf: 1) she's smart, some people think she's a pet to Mrs. T. Shf: 1) she's so smart; it makes me sick; she really makes me mad; how can you stand to be so smart? I mean, a smack.

*SPECIAL 2,5,5th. General rules do not apply to these students as they do to others: (a) physical disability (b) ideosyncratic relationship to the teacher (c) disciplinary freedom.
Kif: 1) she always talks with the teacher; she laughs along with the teacher. Stf: 1) she got to go to lunch with the teacher. Clm: he doesn't have to do some things, you know; he doesn't run too well, he has a (physical disability not specifically mentioned here). Jom: 1) he gets away with a lot of stuff, he can talk back to the teacher.

(TALKER) 18,14,both. A student who talks in class at rule-for-bidden times.
Jim: 1) noisy when we have to do our work. Def: 1) in class she talks to me and B. when we're working. Bef: 1) she just talks a lot. Saf: 1) she likes talking a lot, so she gets a lot of dictionary pages and essays 2) she always talks a lot; she likes to talk; she's alright, but I didn't like her talking to me all the time... Taf: 1) sort of talks all the time, always getting in trouble. Apf: 1) another one of those socialists; she talks a lot with L., and a lot with the other girls.

*TATTLER 2,2,both. Jum: 1) he blabs a lot; he tattles to Mrs. T. Lyf: 1) wrote a note implicating a group of girls in various misdeeds (paraphrased).

(TELLER) 2,1,]st. Kef: 1) she tells me all these things and everything, what's happening. Jem: 1) he's my neatest teller; he tells me all the gossip...

(TOMBOY) 2,2,both. Kef: 1) she's like a boyish girl; she likes to do a lot of things that boys do. Lof: 1) she's sort of a... cowboy...a tomboy.

(TOUGH) 5,7,]st. Mam: 1) a guy who thinks he's all tough and everything 2) he thinks he's all tough and everything. Jum: 1) he's the toughest one in our class; he could beat Mam up.

(TROUBLE) 12,17,both. Kef: 1) gets into trouble a lot in class. Gam: 1) doesn't want to do what the teacher says in class 2) wanders around class 3) and Jum get in trouble in class 4) disobeys the teacher 5) talks back to the yard duties. Saf: 1) uses bad words, gets detention 2) doesnt do work, forgets her homework, gets in trouble on the playground 3) gets in social trouble all the time 4) got in trouble for stealing a lunch 5) disrupts the class by laughing all the time.

*UNTOUCHABLE 2,15,both. A student who is completely despised by other students. Connotes an active effort by other students to derogate the UNTOUCHABLE, rather than a simple passive indifference.
Nif: 1) everybody kicks her, because they don't like her 2) somebody that cries all the time, cause everybody beats her 3) she cries a lot because everybody calls her names 4) people go, "Nif is chicken!", they make her cry and stuff 5) everybody's mean to her; she came from another room 6) she plays with Jim's toys, he doesn't like that 7) everybody picks on her 8) not many people like Nif; she hides during recess; people pick on her, it makes her cry 9) all her friends pick on her 10) everybody tease her, they beat up on her, cause she talk funny. Shf: 1) she thinks she's hot; she walks weird; she bothers Jom; ugly; boys call her a "gross" 2) always bugs you and stuff; not that nice at all 3) terrible 4) the fighting type; if people tease her she says, "C'mon..."; acts all hot; acts like the Fonz 5) she gives me a kick! (makes kicking motion).

(WEIRD) 4,8,both. Mef: shes kind of weird; her teeth are kind of scrunched in the front; her hair is down to there; she makes strange motions (p araphrased) 2) strange; weird 3) some kids think she's weird; she runs kind of weird; she looks away when you're talking to her. Chm: 1) he's weird, he calls me a dog.

(WORKER) 19,11,both. Kef: 1) does a lot of work.Mef: 1) usually gets her work in on time 2) tries harder than anyone else in the class to get her work in; usually gets her work done. Krf: 1) a brat; she does her work wrong; hardly ever turns it in right.

(WRITER) 4,5,both. Mam: 1) likes writing stories. Trf: 1) she and Nif always write plays; they're always writing plays. Stf: 1) she writes good, cursive.

To give a complete picture of the way students label one another the data can be presented by showing all the responses for a single label and by showing all the responses each student in a class made about another single student. Table 1 gives every response coded as (TROUBLE).

Table 1 and Table 2 about here

Table 2 lists all the responses made about Ram, a fifth-grader.

Labels are interpretable in several ways.[1] Space permits their interpretation in only one way here: by value connotation.

These 9 (15.3%) of the labels contain only positive comments:

(ARTIST)	*MODEL
(ATHLETE)	(READER)
(FRIEND)	(TELLER)
*HIAC	(WRITER)
(JOKER)	

These 24 labels (40.7%) contain only negative comments:

(BADDEST)	(CUSSER)	(MOTHER HEN)	(STUPID)
(BIGSHOT)	*CRUEL	(OBNOXIOUS)	(TALKER)
(BRAT)	*EXCUSE-MAKER	(PEST)	(TOUGH)
*BUGGER	(GROSS)	(PRIVILEGE)	(TROUBLE)
(COOL)	(HOT)	*REJECT-S	*UNTOUCHABLE
(CRYBABY)	(JOCK)	(SMACK)	(WEIRD)

These eight (13.6%) contain both positive and negative connotations:

*ABSENTEE	*HELPER-S
*CLUMSY	*HELPER-T
(FIGHTER)	(ROWDY)
(FUTURE-T)	(WORKER)

Four labels (6.7%) include both negative and neutral comments:

(IMMATURE)	*MONITOR-T
(LONER)	*SPECIAL

[1] Other ways do not change the conclusions presented here. They are detailed in a paper in preparation that deals only with the labeling phenomenon and the method used for validating "emic" rather than "etic" categories.

Table 1

Student Responses Coded as (TROUBLE) by Grade[a], Sex

Response	Total	M-M[b]	M-F	F-F	F-M
1. always fools around	2	1	1		
2. chews gum	1	1			
3. doesn't do what he/she is supposed to (in class)	2	1		1	
4. disobeys the T	1				1
5. forgot homework	2			2	
6. "gets me in trouble"	1			1	
7. "gets in trouble a lot in class"	2			1,1	
8. "gets in trouble on the playground"	1			1	
9. "gets in social trouble all the time	3		3		
10. gets spanked	1	1			
11. has to sit outside	1			1	
12. detention	1			1	
13. has to stay in at recess	1				1
14. naughty	1	1			
15. notewriting	1		1		
16. rough on playground	1				1
17. stole a lunch	1		1		

(Continued on next page)

Table 1

Student Responses Coded as (TROUBLE) by Grade[a], Sex

(Continued)

Response		Total	M-M[b]	M-F	F-F	F-M
18.	says bad words to T	1	1			
19.	talks a lot in class	1	1	1	1,3	1
20.	talks to me when I'm trying to work	1			1	
21.	talks back to T	1	1			
22.	tries to get in trouble	1				1
23.	throws pillows around	1				1
24.	uses bad words	1			1	
25.	wanders around classroom (disrupting)	3	1			2
26.	won't do any work	5	1		3	1
27.	[Trouble Alone]	1	1			
Totals						
	N	44	11	7	18	9
	%		25.0	15.9	40.9	20.5

a: First-grade responses are underlined; fifth-grade are not.
b: Means males who were responding about males.

Table 2

Student Statements About Ram

1. he's an "ooh-ooh-ga" horn
2. he'll do it in your ear while you're reading
3. a person you can't really stop
4. he always has to be one-up on everybody
5. his is always better
6. he's another pest like Clm
7. kicks the ball the other way
8. loves spattering in the mud
9. loud
10. noisy
11. likes to run around
12. black hair
13. doesn't get his work in on time
14. is always tripping people
15. I've known him since Kindergarten
16. another one with excuses for not finishing his work (like Shf)
17. just happens to forget to bring things in
18. he's OK sometimes
19. he likes giving people shocks (Note: scraping heels with shoe.)
20. likes Speed Racer
21. Speed Racer is his idol
22. always thinks of future cars
23. short (like Nif)

Table 2

Student Statements About Ram (Continued)

24. nice
25. talkable
26. never does his homework
27. always in trouble
28. strange
29. immature incident recounted (paraphrase)
30. weird
31. corny
32. I don't like him
33. ever since I came here he's been bothering me
34. scares me
35. hits me
36. tries beating me up
37. rowdy a lot
38. sometimes he kicks me when he sits across from me
39. talks a lot
40. sort of noisy
41. always goofs around
42. makes things for his pencil and stuff
43. he and Ton are really good friends
44. they like to change jackets and that kind of stuff...

One category contains both positive and neutral connotations: (SHY). Finally, 13 labels contain only neutral value statements:

(COPYIER)	*INVISIBLE	(QUIET)
*DEP	*LOWAC	(SICK)
*DIFF	(MGM)	(TOMBOY)
(CUMB)	*MANIPULATOR	
*INDIF	*PRESENTER	

The nine labels containing all positive statements fall into two categories (a) labels denoting excellence in skills attainment: (ARTIST), (ATHLETE), *HIAC, (WRITER), (READER), and (b) labels implying that the speaker receives something of value from the labeled one: information from the (TELLER); an envied image of how one ideally should look at school from the *MODEL; entertainment or companionship at recess from the (JOKER) and (FRIEND). Here, then, are two ubiquitous qualities students dream about possessing: superior athletic, artistic, and work skills, and social status.

The all-negative labels tells what students find the most despising - someone with whom interaction results in notoriety or trouble. These students exhibit a definite profile. They are socially inept, i.e., (WEIRD), *UNTOUCHABLE, *REJECT, (GROSS), (STUPID), (OBNOXIOUS), (CRYBABY), disruptive, ugly, bossy, and pesty. They are despised for their qualities both in class (TALKER), *EXCUSE-MAKER, and out of class (BIGSHOT), (TOUGH).

These two categories suggest that among students only a select few, those with good looks, athletic ability and effortless work-completion skills are admired: the rest of

the crowd envies the few and makes life difficult for everyone else they can: the crybabies, the weirds, the untouchables, the grosses, the stupids, the pests, the buggers.

Field roles document this assertion. Two examples illustrate:

Example 1:
10:31 (as recess is beginning): T: "I'll dismiss you when everything's put away." She begins dismissal procedure. Clm walks by Shf. (the *UNTOUCHABLE in this class), as he does he kicks her in the ass, says loudly, "Shf., I get a real kick out of you." Rest of class laughs loudly. T either does not see or ignores.

Example 2:
11:26 CW in progress during a math lesson. Table 2 working individually; T8 the same, engaged but also talking quietly, mainly Saf. Grm and Kem are playing a math game. Apf, Trf with cuisinaire rods in the SE corner on the floor. Jom (Note: a (BIGSHOT), (JOCK), and (CRUEL), but also an (ATHLETE), loudly, "Apf's got holes in her socks! Apf's got holes in her socks!" Apf quickly hides them, very embarrassed. Loud laughter from the class. Apf puts shoes back on, runs out door, on the verge of crying. Jom seems very pleased with himself...

The completely neutral labels provide a marked contrast to adult values. To students there is simply no value judgment concerning such qualities as being dumb ((DUMB), *LOWAC, needing help (DEP) or copying other people's work (COPYIER), or assuming an unnoticed, ignorable status *INVISIBLE, (INDIFF), (QUIET). (The other labels in this all-neutral category are descriptive.)

Ram's profile (Table 2) validates the statement that students are simply unconcerned with qualities in others that will not affect them directly or get them something. The difference in perception is striking between the teacher and the students. while the teacher says of Ram,

"The first kid I've ever seriously thought about retaining: academically very slow: it's an uphill battle; abstract things go right over his head...he's been the low man in the class forever, it's terrible..."

the students stick to either descriptive or impersonal, liability-related statements rather than empathic expressions: "doesn't get his work in on time...", "always in trouble...", "another one with excuses for not finishing his work, like Shf..." The inability to comprehend grade-level work, or being "slow" academically does not enter into the student's interaction with other students. What does directly affect the class is getting work in on time; those who do not jeopardize desired outcomes in future events.

Student Action During Major Lessons

Before its properties can be presented, major lesson needs to be defined. Figure 1 gives a representative breakdown of the school day for three grades, first, second-third, and sixth. With the help of Figure 1 I will briefly discuss the factors that go into making a major lesson.

Figure 1 about here

Lessons can be either major or minor depending on the time of day held, first-grade historicity, length, level of formality (internal structure), regularity, and preemptible status. Reading and math are always major lessons, held in the morning; they are always long, formal, regular (that is, they occur every day) and not prone to postponement, cancel-

A Typical "Official" Schedule for School Days
for 1st, 2-3rd, and 6th grades: Self-Contained Classrooms

Time	Grade First	Second or Third	Sixth
8:00	Arrive by walking, skateboard, bicycle, auto, bus		8:15*
8:30	First bell rings: school officially begins		8:30
9:00	Roll sharing 9:00	Roll sharing or copying quotation	Roll, spelling or copying 9:10
9:30	Reading Groups	Reading Groups	Reading
	Recess 9:45		
10:00	10:00	Handwriting 10:00	Class game 10:20
			before recess 10:25
10:30	Math 10:30	Recess	Recess
	Snack Time 10:45		10:45
11:00	Handwriting 11:00		
	Free Time (play) 11:25		
11:30	Lunch 11:30	Math Groups 11:30	Math 11:30
			Math Review 11:40
		Lunch 11:45*	
12:00	Lunch Recess 12:15		Lunch Recess 12:15
12:30	Rest 12:30	Lunch Recess 12:30	
	T reads to ss 12:45		
1:00	Social studies or art or music or PE or science or special projects	T reads to ss 1:00	
		Social studies (M) or art (W) or music or PE (T-Th) or science or special projects	
1:30	1:30		T reads to ss 1:30
	Clean up 1:45		Music or art or science (T-Th) or other 1:50
2:00	Dismiss		Recess 2:05
		Clean up Dismiss 2:20	Social Studies 2:45
2:30			PE 3:05
3:10			Clean up Dismiss

* = approximate time

lation, or preemption. In addition, reading and math are introduced as major lessons in the first grade, remain major in the fourth grade, as well as the sixth-grade. Minor lessons are usually held in the afternoon, may be long or short, do not have a rigid, formal format, are almost always irregularly held, and may be preempted by any number of other events such as field trips, special projects, assemblies, school-wide sports events, or early dismissal (which never occurs in the morning, but always at the end of the school day.)

The temporal order of lessons when viewed in this manner are correspondent across grades. For example, although the sixth-grade day is longer and contains more activities, social studies is considered a minor lesson because it possesses minor lesson properties: although it can be long or short, it is held in the afternoon, has an informal format, may be preempted by other activities, and has a history from first grade of being a minor lesson; thus, it must remain a minor lesson throughout elementary school.

Lessons are labeled by students according to the topic: math, reading, language arts. In addition to the criteria distinguishing major from minor lessons just described to students, major lessons are usually <u>done</u>, minor lessons are usually <u>had</u>:

> **Saf:** . . . in the morning we do reading and everything and language arts and everything, then we do math . . . then we go to lunch . . . then we have social studies, then we have PE . . . except on Wednesday's we have art.

Eff: . . . we do English, language arts, we do reading, we go to recess, then we come back in and we correct the math pages that were due yesterday, we do a page of math . . . (go to lunch, then we come, we have spelling, she reads to us, then, oh, today, we're gonna have art.

Stf: Then we do language arts and stuff, (then recess) then we do math and then I like lunch. (after lunch) we come back in, the teacher reads to us, then we have oceanography, then we have art on Wednesday's, the rest of the days we meet on the field for PE.

In traditional classes major lessons are always done in the classroom, although they could be done in any setting. Participants can be divided into "essential participants" and auxiliary participants." Essential participants consist of the class's teacher (or some teacher) and the class's students. Auxiliary participants consist of other adults such as reading teacher, math specialist, parent volunteer, student teacher, classroom aide, or occasionally other students such as cross-age tutors.

The requirement that students be prepared to start and end major lessons more than once each day accounts for the majority of the paraphernalia each student possesses. Table 3 lists the contents of a fifth grade student's desk. Items 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 12 relate directly to major lessons; items 1, 6, and 11 relate to minor lessons; items 12-16 are general-use tools; item 17 is the only personal item in the desk.

Table 3 about here

Table 3

Inventory of a Fifth-Grade Male Student's Desk

No.	Related to:	Position:	Item:
1	Science	RT[a]	2 pieces of white paper, one with a partially finished fish drawing on it
2	Reading	RT	One reading folder, containing one sheet of paper labeled "Contract" on the top.
3	Reading	RT	Seven maze dittos, unfinished
4	Reading	RM[a]	Booklet, SRA Progress Guide
5	Reading	RM	Self-make booklet, Vocabulary
6	Music	RB[a]	Textbook, music, state text
7	English, language arts	LT[a]	Textbook: Discovery in English
8	Math	LT	Math, state series textbook
9	Reading	LT	Textbook, Bold Journeys
10	Reading	LM[a]	Self made book, My Journal. Topics include my mother; what I did last week.
11	Health	LB	Textbook, Health, State Test
12	General use	Scattered	3 used pencils
13	General use, testtaking	Scattered	4 colored marking pens
14	General use	Scattered	1 pair scissors
15	General use, math	Scattered	1 ruler
16	General use	Scattered	1 eraser
17	Personal	Hidden on very bottom under music textbook	2 folded valentines, with some younger male student's picture on each one

[a]RT = right pile, top of stack; LT = left pile, top of stack
RM = right pile, middle of stack; LM = left pile, middle of stack
RB = right pile, bottom of stack; LB = left pile, bottom of stack

Materials needed for major lessons are uncomplicated and derive from three sources. A book and/or workbook, and pencil come from the student's desk. Paper is obtained from a central location, while dittos and board writing materials are the teacher's responsibility to prepare. Optional materials may be homework papers or rulers, compasses, crayons, etc. Other items may occasionally be introduced by the teacher and collected at the end of the lesson, but the student need only have available the pencil-book-paper triad to be considered "prepared".

In the following transcript segments the teacher is T; students are named by the first two letters of their name plus an m or an f as the third letter to indicate male or female. A map of the room is shown in Figure 2, with the positions of the students marked where their permanent seats are, and where they begin the lesson. The scene before this constructed lesson is recess, the scene after, lunch.

Figure 2 about here

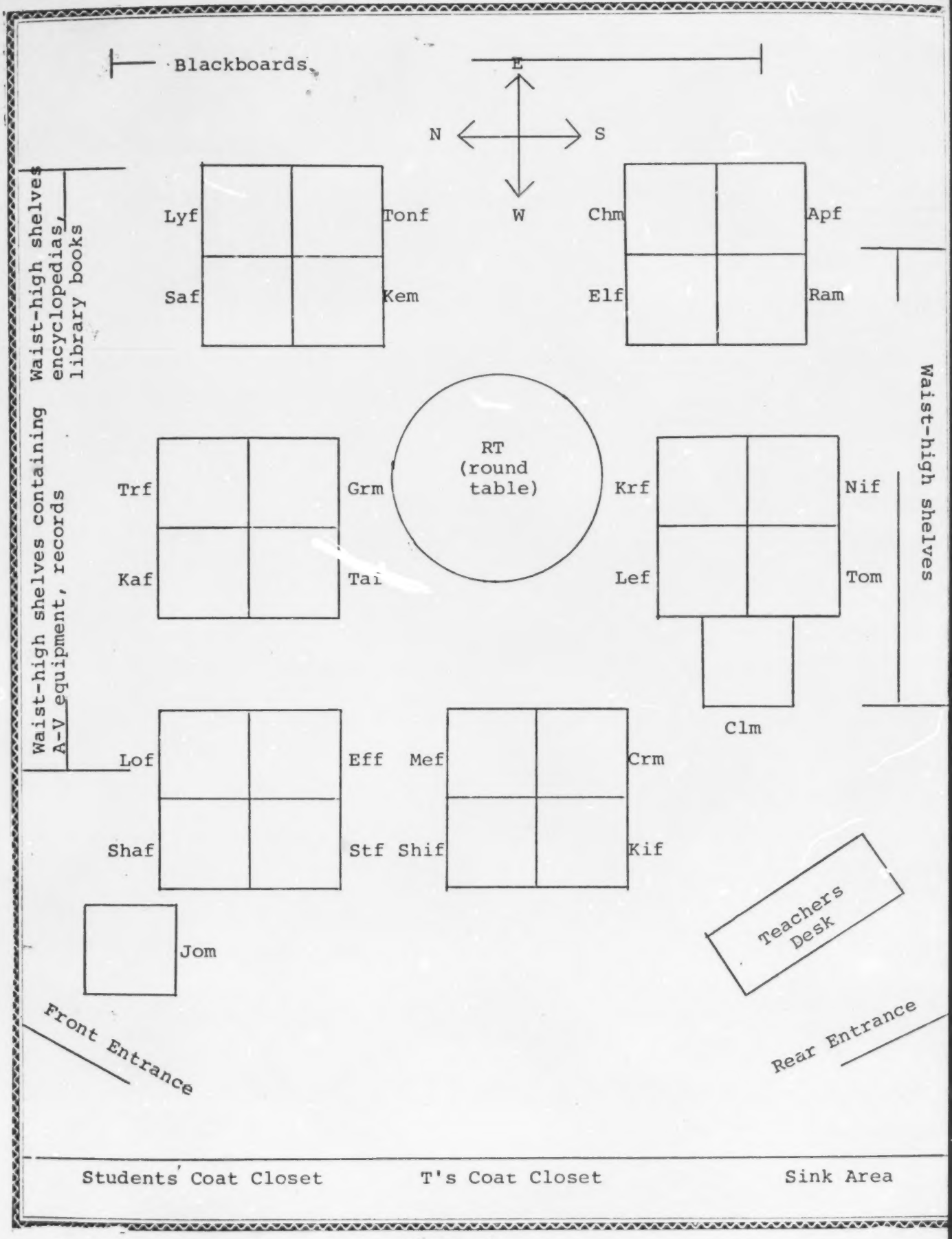

Figure 2
Typical Classroom Setting, Elementary School

To students, major lessons are divided into six general parts. Students do not use specific labels for these parts; I call them: (a) PREP1 - a short period of time at the beginning of the major lesson (ML) in which settling in from the previous scene takes place. Students describe PREP1 as: "Getting your stuff out . . .; (b) LESSON: "correcting . . .," "checking the homework . . .," "do the problems in class . . .;" these descriptions belong to a category I call LESSON. This is the part of the ML taught as a teaching skill in credentials programs, in which the teacher leads the class in some prepared activity; (c) TRANS, which is the transition time between LESSON and CW; (d) CW (Comfortable Work) again has no universal label but consists formally of teacher-assigned independent work connected to LESSON; (e) what I call CUE, a period of time toward the end of the lesson when students pick up the cue that CW is drawing to a close; (f) PREP2, the official indication that a lesson is completed and preparation for recess, lunch or a minor lesson should begin.

These six parts are necessary and sufficient conditions by which students recognize a scene as a major lesson (ML). A teacher who attempts, for example, to begin LESSON within 10 seconds of the recess bell will quickly learn (but perhaps not recognize) the existence of PREP1. I have no data on where this pattern is derived; it is already established in first-grade by January.[2]

PREP1: PREP1 begins immediately upon entering the room from recess. Depending on the grade level and previous activity it varies in time from 9 minutes in first-grade following the AM recess to 3 minutes following role call/ sharing; in sixth-grade it varies from 4 minutes following AM recess to 1.5 minutes following another minor lesson such as a spelling test.

The desired outcome is to end up seated, with the correct tools and materials required by the specific subject, at approximately the same time as other students.

Activities fall into two categories: permissible and not permissible. Almost any activity related to settling in is permissible; the more related to actual preparation for the ensuing lesson the more permissible the activity. It is important to visibly demonstrate progress toward readiness, even though unfinished business from the previous scene, especially recess, can be completed without sanctions.

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[2] It is my hunch that the major lesson initially is composed of only two activites: LESSON and CW. For example, early in kindergarten when formal lessons are just beginning, students have no desk, no permanent supplies, no responsibilities for anticipating the next scene. They simply walk into a prearranged setting where all materials are already on the tables. The beginning of the lesson and action are simultaneous, likewise CW follows directly from LESSON, and there is again no TRANS at the end of the lesson; when each kindergartener is finished, he or she simply runs outside to play. Perhaps as time blocks become more rigid students resist filling them with work and collectively "bargain" with time fillers such as PREP, TRANS, or CUE.

10:48 Class walks into room. Ram goes to sink, wets paper towel and wipes face, puts paper towel inside top of shirt like a bib. Chm and Crm are last to come in after getting a drink. Saf finishing a conversation re: beating up a girl from another class after school (with Krf). T has not said a word yet. Most students seated now, but very few went directly to seat from the door. Books are coming out. All seated except for Apf and Lof who are at bulletin board (SE) talking with backs turned to class. Now they both run to seats: Lof across room to T5, Apf to hers at T1. Homework papers not all out, conversation continues, but all students are seated, attentive, ready for LESSON. T reads
10:51 the answer to each question...

LESSON is the most formal part of the scene major lesson (ML). There are several basic rules that apply during LESSON, but three especially must remain foremost in students' minds: (1) remember that during LESSON the teacher is in front of the class <u>in charge</u>, and adapt behavior to this reality;

2. do not talk except at appropriate breaks, 3. if the next scene is nonacademic, use acceptable behaviors in LESSON to insu the desireable outcomes contained in the next scene, or avoid undesireable outcomes if they may occur:

10:48 Correcting math begins. Students are in seats; each one takes out a fine-tipped marking pen and a homework sheet from the day before. All have the paper done except for Saf, Taf, and Clm.
T: "No pencils, only flare pens."

(continued on next page)

10:50 T reads the answer to each question. She sits on the west side of the round table. I notice that students do not have their own papers, but the paper of a friend. I did not see the exchange. A pattern develops after the first answer: T reads a series of answers while every student intently goes down the list on the paper and puts a check (wrong) or a C (correct) next to each answer. When T stops to catch her breath at the end of each of the four sections, the same thing happens: there is a loud gabble of voices, punctuated with an occasional distinct voice:

Kaf: (to Trf): "I only missed one...(proudly)"

Tom: (across the room in speechless talk to Kem) "How many?"

Kem: (back to Tom, whose paper he has) "holds up 1 finger, says, "One" in a voiceless word. Tom looks very proud.

Eff: "Sixteen out of 17, how about that?" (to no one spycial)

Clm and Saf are not taking part in this pattern. Crm has Clm's paper and holds it up to Clm, showing 17 large red C checks where the answers should be (the paper is completely blank). (Note: Clm and Saf are not pushing their luck. T knows their papers were not done, but as long as they do not take part in the excitement, like missing a reward, no problem. If they had tried to fake it or joined in after each section, I can bet T would jump on them.) (Note: Taf is one of the few students who cannot do the problems; ergo, she is correcting someone else's paper but without any external guilt showing. T typically affords Taf special treatment academically.)

10:55 The second section is done, same as the first. There is a big discussion about number 18.

T: "All those who got #18 right, raise your hands." Most go up.

T: "Great! Number 18 is a little harder." Those who got it right smile, appear proud to be recognized. For the fourth section T changes strategy and asks for answers from students. Jom, Kaf, Stf, Eff, Mef, Shif, Lef, Kif raise hands. No response from Tl or T8 at all.

(continued on next page)

10:57 T calls for all hands to be up:

R: "Every...hand...in...this...room...should...be... up! If your hand's not up, you're not exercising your brain!" More hands go up, but T1 and T8 still do not have all up, while all other tables do. Crm's hand is up even though he has Clm's paper with no answers on it. T ignores hands that are up when calling for answers. I can't tell how she choses respondees.

Talking in the above transcript segment is limited to breaks and is related to the content of LESSON. Another transcript segment from a different day again bears out the students' collective patterns during lesson:

11:00 Class continues checking math; T is leading, reading the answers. No other materials are out; all are attentive. One of the most engaged times I have seen. This pattern takes place: T reads, calls out the answers one at a time, and there is absolute quiet: T stops at ends of pages, at natural stopping points (ends of sections) and conversation ensues. The specific nature of this conversation is subject-oriented: all conversation concerns problems, includes groans and asides, questions that are more rhetorical than anything else.

Shif: "Are you sure #13 is 253?"

11:04 The class is checking like members of an orchestra. Krf is checking off wrong answers like a first violin during a pittsacatto (sic) movement. All are on the same activity. T gives an answer re: the weight in kilos of various objects; T is the conductor with her 26 piece orchestra following perfectly.

The group collective activity in line 19-21 is ORCH (ORCHESTRA). This is a collective activity imbedded in LESSON. ORCH occurs frequently in activities involving step by step task completion. Some other instances of ORCH documented in the field notes are a word by word dictation (Grade 1), a language arts lesson where the teacher reads the

beginning of a sentence and selects among hand raisers for a student to finish the sentence (Grade 6).

LESSON can also occur with only part of the class at a time; the most prevalent case being where reading groups are the subject. The rest of the class then engages in a complementary form of seatwork.

TRANS: TRANS (part 4) is the collective transitional activity in a major lesson between LESSON and CW. TRANS has some interesting characteristics. It is so much a part of a major lesson that an account-able set of instructions are rarely made explicit by the teacher as LESSON gives way to CW. A transcript segment here can illustrate TRANS. In this segment (sixth-grade, math, half of class is grouped away from their seats but with their chairs with the T, finishing a lesson on isolating an unknown; the rest of class is doing seatwork based on a Junior Scholastic. The lesson started at 8:45).

9:12 The group is doing the last problem on their chalkboards. Others around room are doing CW (explained later).

9:13 T puts down the chalk.

T: "What we're gonna do Monday is review. this, . . . then Tuesday we'll have the test. So what I want to do is . . ." T looks in math book without finishing sentence, writes on board:

MATH
p. 121 text
#3, 6, 8, 11, 12

T's group get up, slide chairs back to seats. Rest of class puts away Junior Scholastics, all begin p. 121 of math textbook.

The T never states the lesson was over, but glosses the statement, "We are finished now. I am going to write the next half hour's activity on the board and I desire you to go back to your seat now and begin work on it. Those of you with Junior Scholastics, (etc.), put them away and also begin work in your math texts."

Thus, TRANS takes place with a minimum of "surface" direction since what comes next is neither novel or unexpected.

TRANS has a self-paced, unhurried aspect about it. There are two plausible reasons for this feature. One, students act as a group rather than as a set of individuals in most supervised scenes at school. Thus, in TRANS, a feedback system works to create TRANS's self-pacing flavor. For example, the simplest sequence that can take place during a TRANS: folding a math paper in half, putting it in a math book, putting the book into a desk, obtaining another book and piece of paper, opening the new book, beginning the next part of ML takes 30 seconds or less. In practice, there are 30! variations to this routine: getting drinks, sharpening pencils, asking peers or T a question, etc., that postpone the finality of the time segment. These self-pacing collective activities are spontaneous. The second activity set is intentional and demonstrates the collective power of the class. Unless the classroom teacher screams and prods constantly he cannot hurry the last drinker or pencil sharpener each time TRANS occurs during the day. Since experienced

teachers will not either begin or relinquish control of a class until everyone is "ready", a time lag develops that allows those students who were previously ready to chance that missed drink of water, that last important communication to a friend. This initiates another period of waiting.

Unlike PREP, TRANS does not end in a central collective focus but ends in an independent activity that is termed CW, the fourth part of ML.

CW: The major characteristic of CW, working alone, determine the formal (i.e., teacher-recognized) properties of CW. As Comfortable Work implies, this phase of ML is, on the surface, less structured than PREP1, LESSON, or TRANS. Unlike these three segments, the teacher is neither timing the class, i.e., waiting for the class to complete a short-term objective, or demanding their undivided attention. There is less of a focus on one central activity, more tools are employed if they are needed to "get work done," chairs may be moved together to facilitate "project" completion, teacher style includes conversation with individuals rather than a formal didactic question-answer format, there is more movement, student activities can be temporarily interrupted for a trip to the bathroom (library, office, drinking fountain), and clusters of students often form although independent work is usually the norm (cf. Durlak et al, 1972 for a further description of these dimensions).

Behind the formal properties lie the reality of CW. It is actually a highly structured period of ML consisting of

a three phase cyclic substructure embedded within an overall framework. Figure 3 shows this structure.

Figure 3 about here

Figure 3 can be explained by considering the time between two successive T sanctions, "It's getting too noisy in here . . ." as a microevent with stable, account-able properties. A look at two transcript segments will illustrate this cycle. (Some activities between listed times have been omitted).

CW, Transcript Segment 1 (Day 31, Grade 2)

(LESSON, TRANS has just ended)

1:00 T passes out some kind of worksheet to each student

1:07 T: "Alright, let's quiet down. I see a lot of people not working . . ."
The noise level goes to zero.

1:12 T: "Shhhh . . ."

The noise level goes to zero again. (Note: I did not notice the higher noise level before T went "Shhh . . ." but now the difference is noticeable.)

1:20 T: "Shhh . . ." This is not the end of her message. She continues staring around the room as if challenging students to go back to their talking. Finally looks back down at her paperwork (Note: gradebook). The talking resumes at T2.

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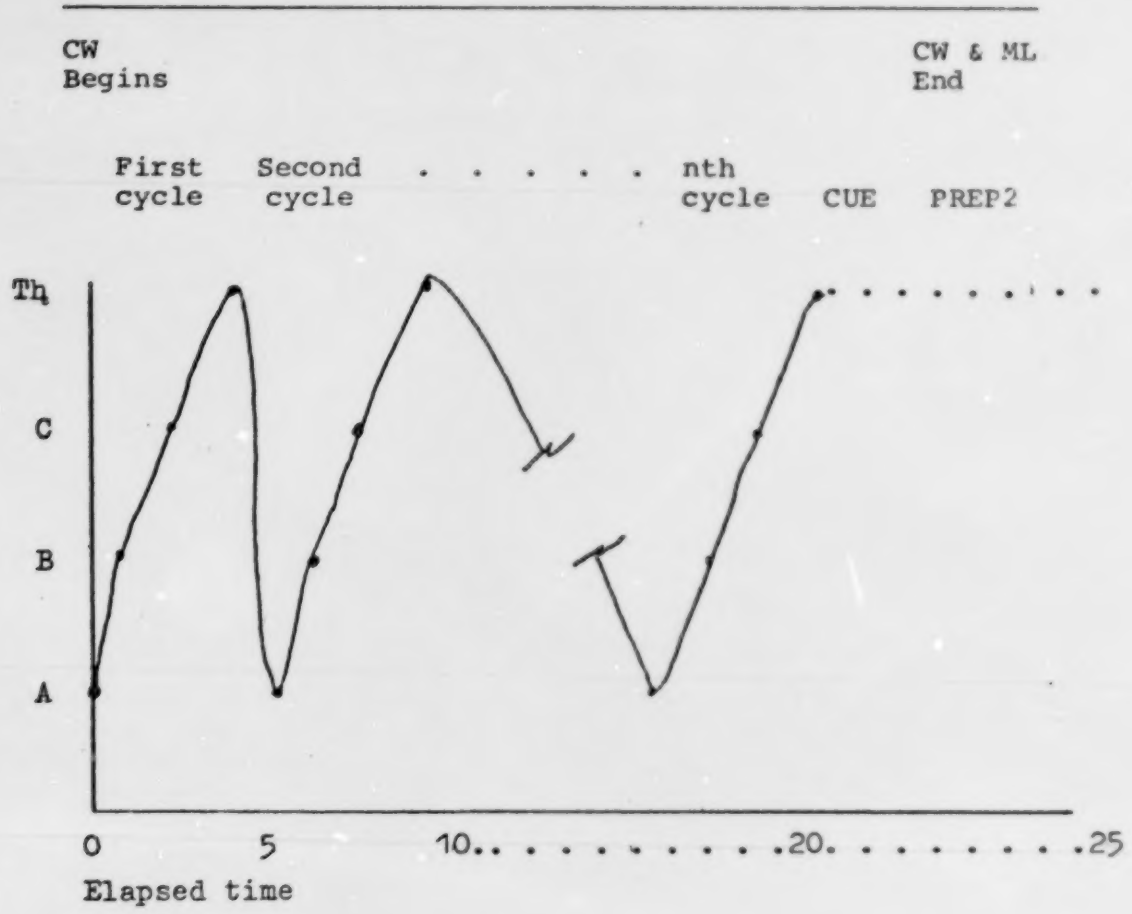


Complete Cycle
A = all engaged, zero or low noise level; all seated.
B = Some engaged, low noise level; 1 Or 2 not seated.
C = Few engaged, moderate noise level; 5 or more "up".
Th = Threshold, T verbal or nonverbal sanction.

Figure 3

Structure of CW Portion of ML

1:27 T: "QUIET!!!" "If you need to discuss your reading, do . . . it . . . quietly!" Talking stops completely, now it is resuming. T2 is definitely the source where the ripple effect begins. It is Dam and Blm this time.

1:33 Activity: Noise level is a hum, no distinct sound. 4 students up, 1 out of room at bathroom, 4 engaged, 14 talking or passing the time . . .

1:34 T: "QUIET!!!" "You have less than 10 minutes left!"

Noise (Note: mainly student dyads talking in a low voice to each other) subsides, then returns to average level.

CW, Transcript Segment 2 (Day Number 2)

(A student teacher has just finished the LESSON portion of a ML)

8:48 Activity summary: CW is in progress. 5 students up. Individual voices heard from Table 2 (Dam, Blm, Mam) 3 students engaged in writing. 17 partially engaged or whispering to each other.

8:51 ST: "Hey! Quiet down, I didn't say to talk. Get your paper."

8:52 ST: "Second-grade, third-grade! There shouldn't be any talking. You have 15 problems on the board."

8:56 All are seated, noise level = hum. Pencils are busy, each student looks at board, then writes on paper, does this over and over, once for each letter or word.

(There is a principal's loudspeaker announcement between 8:57 and 9:01 that breaks the cycle.)

9:04 MT leaves the room.

9:06 ST: "People! There are still other people working on the board work - can you be quiet?!

(continued on next page)

9:08 Activity summary: Noise level is a noticeable hum. 5 students up: 3 at Teacher's Desk, 2 in SW corner looking at a bulletin board. The quiet order when MT present begins to break down. Events are moving faster: more students are up; less attention to task; it is harder to be heard so voices are louder and more distinct, noise is spreading from T2 to rest of class. T1, for example, is not engaged at all; the 6 ss there are discussing a bottle of perfume. . .

9:10 ST: "EXCUSE ME . . . Do I have to put names down for talking everytime Mrs. T leaves the room? ST goes to board, writes:

"TALKING"

ST: "Who wants to be first on my list? That means no recess at noon...you guys are supposed to be working on independent reading...I know that's hard but I want you to be quiet..."

9:15 Activity summary: 5 students on task: (by desk location) 4a, 3a, c, 2a. 5 students at Teacher's Desk questioning ST; student at 4b cutting paper inside her desk with a pair of blunt-nosed scissors; all others talking, mainly in dyads.

9:18 ST: "1...2...3...4 (etc., to 10). Noise continues to about 7 then subsides.

These two segments illustrate verbal teacher sanctions. The next transcript segment shows how non-verbal gesture serves the same function:

CW Transcript Segment 3 (Grade 5, CW in progress)

11:31 The conversation at T8 (Tom's table) continues. T walks over, stands right in front of the table without saying a word for about 30 seconds. The four students hunch over their work the whole time. Noise level in the rest of the class goes from a low hum to almost no noise.

T: "Lyf, your performance was much better before (you moved). It shouldn't take you five minutes to do one problem."

(continued on next page)

> All students at T8 continue to work without looking up. T goes back to Teacher's Desk, the noise level increases again to a low hum. Work by all students on math problems continue, there is much socializing.

Several identifiable rules are followed so closely that CW can be viewed as a gaming activity. There are rules governing absolute maximum noise levels (i.e., screaming is illegal), rules dealing with minimum product attainment (i.e., producing nothing at all is illegal), rules concerned with standards of permissible deviant activity, i.e., (games cannot be out until the very end of CW) and rules outlining timing of work and nonwork activities.

This last rule needs elaboration. In classrooms where a product is required at the end of CW, say that a certain workbook page be finished, students collectively adhere to a strategy I call SPURT. SPURT's rules are that very little work need be done until the very end of CW, at CUE (discussed next). Socializing and timepassing (PT) are acceptable given the restriction that they be done quietly and with a surface commitment to the formal work ethic of ML. Students know, for example, to take a textbook with them if they cross the room to visit a friend because if one attempts the trip emptyhanded there is a good chance the teacher will want to know what and why.

To ask why SPURT occurs (or how to get more work out of students during CW) brings to mind Garfinkel's (1967)

analogy that if "only the walls of a building were gotten out of the way one could see better what was keeping the roof up." (p. 22). Students are not machines, nor do they get paid for piecemeal work. Nor can they go home if all their work is done. Thus, since there is a definite amount of time alloted in CW and the work assigned fills only a fraction of that time slot, what is left except to comfortably pass the time (PT) until the end of the scene? Likewise, from the teacher's perspective, if surface work activity exists there is no reason to impose a more strict routine on the class. For one, it would require a great effort to boost collective work output for just one day; for another, even to maintain a supreme class effort the entire year would get the teacher nowhere since for students next September brings advancement to the next grade and a start at the beginning of that grade's curriculum, not beyond. Finally, if all a students work were done at school parents would complain that no homework was being assigned. Given the structure of school, both parties have everything to lose and nothing to gain by converting the CW game to a rigorous work-filled period.

CUE: CUE is that part of ML in which students pick up some cue that the lesson will soon be ending. During CUE the work pace intensifies, especially if SPURT is in progress. Cues seldom are verbal; they seem to involve a collective sensitivity to changes in noise level or student movement around the room. Often those students who were out of the

room return en masse - this serves as a cue. CUE is under further investigation at the time of this writing.

PREP2: PREP2 begins when the teacher announces that clean-up, changeover, turning in papers, etc., should begin. PREP2 is also still under investigation at this time.

Decisions, Strategies, and Actions

This last section will expand upon the ethnographic hypotheses concerning the two sets of student behaviors discussed in this paper, student labeling behavior, and how lessons get done. Earlier in the paper I mentioned the major goal of students: maximizing personal worth while satisfying institutional demands. This goal appears to be contradictory but attainable given the correct sequence of decisions and strategies leading to two modes of action; one collective and the other individual. I propose the model shown in Figure 4 as a possible explanation of this decision-strategy-action sequence.

Figure 4 about here

The model relies on these assumptions:

1. There are basically two conditions at school: Type A, supervised, and Type B, unsupervised. An example of Type A is LESSON, an example of Type B is RECESS.

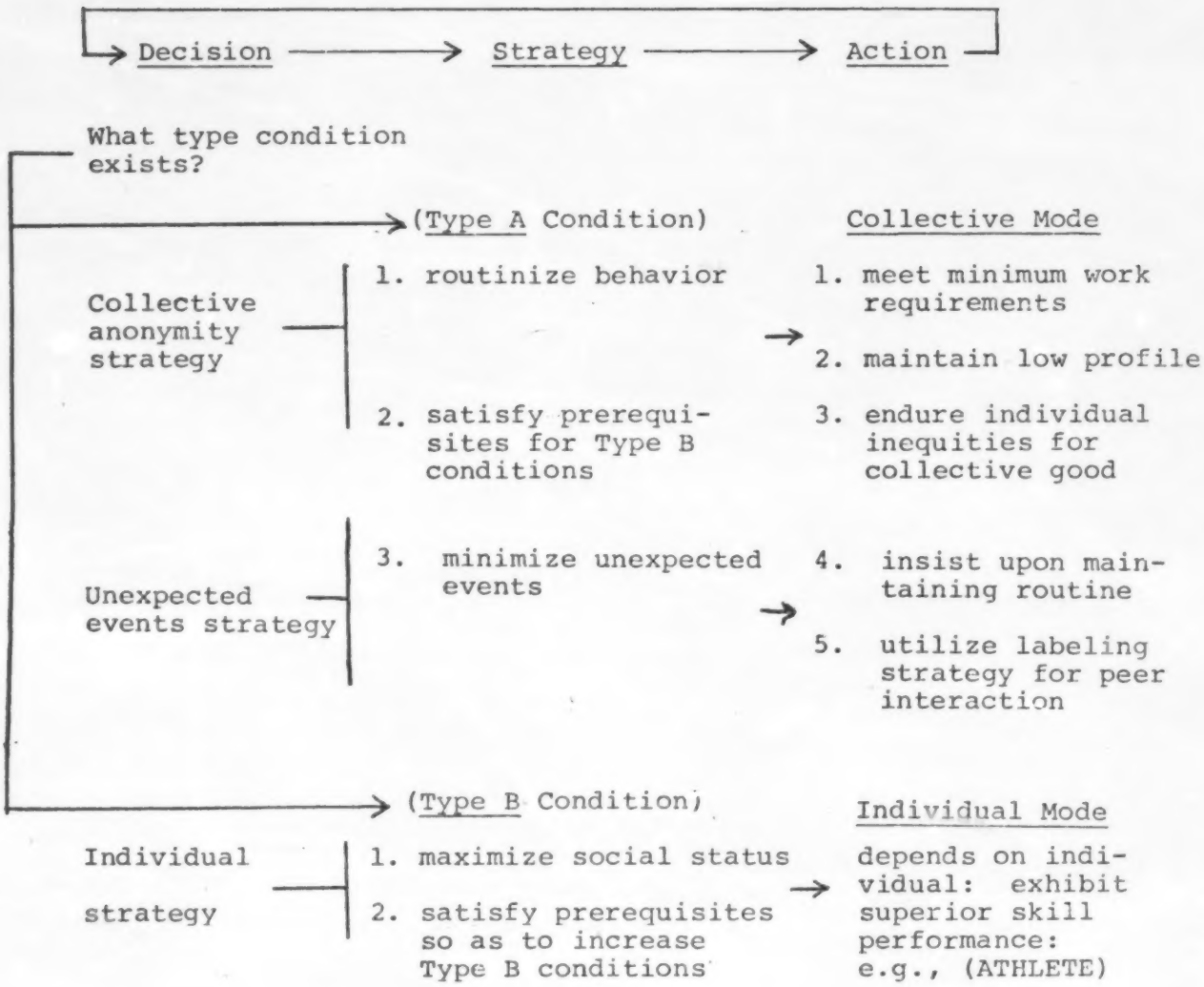

Decision
Strategy
Action
What type condition exists?
(Type A Condition)
Collective Mode
Collective anonymity strategy
1. routinize behavior
2. satisfy prerequisites for Type B conditions
1. meet minimum work requirements
2. maintain low profile
3. endure individual inequities for collective good
Unexpected events strategy
3. minimize unexpected events
4. insist upon maintaining routine
5. utilize labeling strategy for peer interaction
(Type B Condition)
Individual Mode
Individual strategy
1. maximize social status
2. satisfy prerequisites so as to increase Type B conditions
depends on individual: exhibit superior skill performance: e.g., (ATHLETE)

Figure 4

A Student Decision-Strategy-Action Model

2. Individual recognition by institutional authorities during Type A conditions often has undesired outcomes.
3. Personal worth (meaning an individual's status among peers) can safely be increased only during Type B conditions.
4. Type A conditions contain prerequisites for the occurence of Type B conditions.

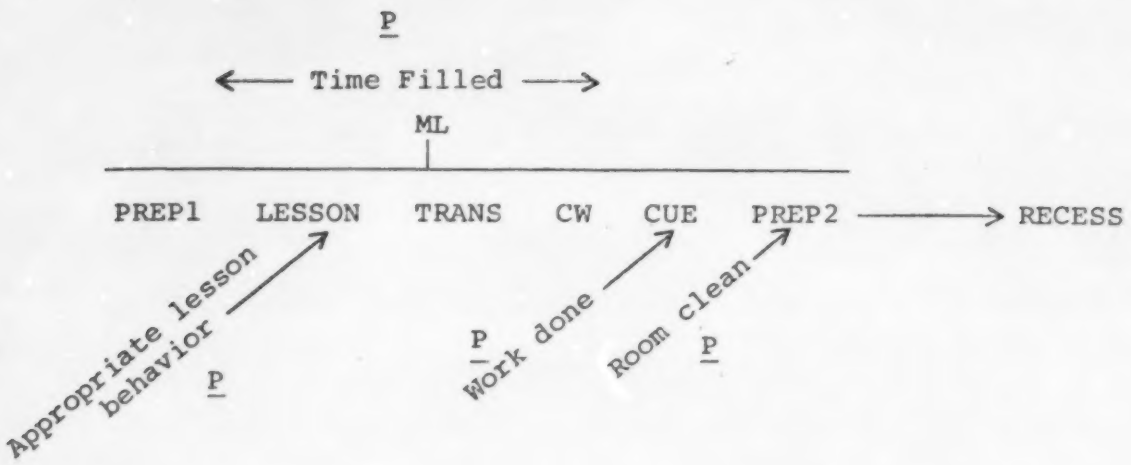
The goals are as stated before. Given the facts and goals, students use the mechanism of assessing the condition, Type A or Type B, and then employing certain strategies to bring about Type B situations.

Decisions. To restate the first hypothesis, students are knowing social members who actively engage in purposive behavior, i.e., performance and desired outcome are related. Thus, one can assert that a relationship but the desired outcome and behavior exists. (Agar, 1973; Frake, 1964).

The relationship between ML and recess illustrate this assertion. In the diagram below, PREP1 contains the prerequisite for LESSON (heavy line), LESSON contains the prerequisites for CW. CW contains desirable elements such as less supervision, ergo more movement and socializing possibilities.

PREP1 LESSON TRANS CW CUE PREP2

Likewise, the entire ML contains the prerequisites for recess, a Type B (unsupervised) condition. A diagram linking ML to RECESS might look like this, with prerequisites labeled as P:



Students make decisions, then, based on certain information. They know that, given the necessary prerequisites, some scenes have a high probability of occurence, i.e., are expected, regular, and recurrent. They also can distinguish between Type A and Type B conditions. Finally, they know that sometimes an unexpected scene occurs in place of an expected one, but that the probability of this occurence is low and the prerequisites for the unexpected scene unclear. They must decide, then, whether an ongoing scene is Type A or Type B and determine the prerequisite behavior necessary to attain either an expected Type A condition (which contains the prerequisites for a Type B) or a Type B condition.

Strategies - If Type A conditions prevail students employ these strategies: maximizing the probability of routine events occurring while minimizing the probability of unexpected events occurring; always determining and satisfying prerequisites for Type B conditions, i.e., before satisfying any other prerequisites, bringing about desired outcome events.

An assertion is that students dislike unexpected events because the prerequisites cannot be determined from previous experience, nor can the desireability of the event be predicted. On the other hand, routine events are familiar and cognitively linkable to prerequisites.

How does labeling bear on this assertion? On one hand, class members who keep events from flowing sm-othly are given negative evaluations: one cannot trust a classmate who is a (TALKER), a (PEST), or a (BUGGER) because (TROUBLE)-type consequences ensue unexpectedly. On the other hand, the most predictable classmates are the (QUIET)s, the (INVISIBLE)s, or the *HIACs; these students can be at least expected to consistently produce some of the prerequisites for Type B outcomes: quiet and good, timely work.

Actions - Type A conditions produce a collective mode of action by students. Action is based on the fact that Type A conditions are precarious, vulnerable times, so the collective mode involves keeping a low profile, meeting minimum requirements and no more, accepting individually unjust but collectively necessary punishment (with the future in mind):

1. Kaf, a fifth-grade female, came in from a music lesson during PREP2. The class had failed to meet prerequisites and thus was being kept in at recess, with heads down. Kaf came in, assessed the situation and then simply took her punishment with the rest of the class. This strategy paid off, since the teacher only kept the class a minute and then let them go out. (paraphrased field notes)

(continued on next page)

2. The teacher in the first-grade class reprimanded the wrong male student during an altercation. There was no student reaction at all. (paraphrased field notes)

and occasionally sacrificing a class individual for the collective good:

3. During a language arts lesson there was considerable noise in a second grade. The teacher became frustrated and said the class would stay in if anyone else talked. The class quieted down for a few minutes but then went back to general low whispering. The teacher, who was busy with a student, turned and shouted, "Who's talking?" The class responded in unison, "Nancy..." Nancy stayed in. The rest of the class got their recess. (field notes paraphrased).

In this example there was nothing personal about the class sacrificing Nancy. This phenomenon could account for the existence of an *UNTOUCHABLE in many classes.

Treating peers stereotypically is an action that allows the present reality to be used as a systematizing guideline for predicting and controlling future events.

Summary

The objective of this ongoing project is to explore the experiential world of the elementary student. It was this study's aim to describe what elementary students are like and to explore their perceptions of setting, events, and other school members.

Studentship can be defined as a construct that tries to explain in an "emic" manner the way that student-as-member "knows" the daily reality of school and class; how he or she recognizes and decodes experience into manageable cognitive chunks; how activity is guided by this decoding process.

This research adhered to two perspectives. First was an overriding emic perspective. This means that, in order to arrive at an adequate ethnographic accounting, reports and accounts were based on the meaning students attributed the milieu. Second was an exploratory, hypothesis-generating perspective; that, because of the unexplored nature of studentship, basic description, distillation of surprising or problematic phenomena from this description (Overholt & Stalling, 1976), and a rudimentary attempt to propose ethnographic hypotheses for these phenomena would be the extent of study.

Two surprising sets of phenomena were presented in this paper. The first set dealt with the way that young students labeled their classmates; 59 labels were presented that ranged from *ABSENTEE to (WRITER). One that was prevalent in traditional classrooms is the *UNTOUCHABLE: a student who is picked on, ridiculed,

beat up by other class members and considered by the class to be in the lowest possible caste. Included as part of the definition is a characteristic typical of the other labels: a curious lack of affect on the part of the other students toward the *UNTOUCHABLE. Although members often behaved cruelly and even viciously toward the *UNTOUCHABLE, personal feelings were not involved. To students, derogating the *UNTOUCHABLE is analogous to offhandedly killing a bothersome fly.

The second set of phenomena was a microscopic accounting of the way that students understand lessons: adult academic values are not a part of the student vocabulary; academic prowess is understood only as an ability (or lack thereof) for completing requisite amounts of assigned work rather than in terms of long-range achievement. Learning is never mentioned except for learning as successful accomplishment of previously unexhibited social or technical skills. The classroom routine is not considered boring to students; quite to the contrary, studentship is intimately linked to maintaining comfortable, expected, and routine events and avoiding unexpected ones. In this paper a major lesson illustrated these points.

This paper documents only what schools and students are like; I must reiterate that given the class and school context no behavior was considered maladaptive either during my observations or during validation of the emic labels by other students. Students in schools have reasons for doing what they do and saying what they say. This paper has tried to adequately describe these categories without making value judgements about them.

Appendix 1: Methodology

The portion of this ongoing research described in this paper was conducted in the Southern California area between October 1976 and June 1977.

Twenty-seven elementary classrooms were employed. They ran the entire gamut from lower to upper SES, from kindergarten to sixth-grade, and from traditional to "open" style classes.

Two classrooms were intensively observed and the students interviewed. One was a lower middle to middle SES first-second grade combination in a suburban school. There were 24 students in this class, about one-half being Anglo, one-third being Chicano, and the other third being of Black or Oriental origin.

The second classroom was a middle-class fifth-grade group of students from a suburban school. There were 26 students in this class; 80% were Anglo and the other 20% were of Chicano origin.

There were three phases of data collection. The first phase ran from October 1976 to January 1977; this phase was observational and was conducted in each of the 27 different classrooms at irregular times. What resulted from this phase was a large store of event descriptions across different types and levels of classes.

The second phase consisted of an ethnographic accounting of events in the first- and fifth-grade classes. Observations were done on a daily basis from February until June,

resulting in 25 full days' accounts for the fifth-grade and 16 full days' accounts for the first-grade.

During these observations, the primary focus was on student ethos. Thus, rather than focusing only on didactic events I went where the students went and tried to capture the flavor of the students' school day in its entirety.

What resulted from this phase was a relatively complete accounting of daily cyclic events occurring between 8:00 a.m. and 3:15 p.m., and a corresponding interpretation of the more unforgettable events among them. These interpretations were the result of informal conversations the students and I had during recesses, when the events were fresh in their minds or so important that they automatically became the topic of conversation. The second phase, then, aided me in my search for a student perspective on school by adding a second interpretive layer to the observational record of the first phase.

Imbedded within the second phase was a third phase during which students were interviewed. This third phase occurred at the end of the fifth-grade observation, during April of 1977, and at the end of the first-grade observation, during June of 1977.

In the second phase it was possible to do a fair amount of informal interviewing while standing on the playground at AM recess, lunch recess, or PM recess. In contrast, the Phase 3 interviews were totally formal; the topics centered around the students' interpretations of events I had not

understood, a full rundown of what each student thought he or she did during a typical day, and a description of each of their classmates.

I will only describe here the analysis of the student transcripts. The ethographic method has been described in many other sources; the Overholt & Stallings (1976) article and bibliography will provide the interested reader with additional information; Wilson, (1977) also provides an excellent theoretical and methodological treatment.

All the audio recordings were transcribed, and then rearranged in several ways. First, was a compilation of remarks about each student made by all the other students. Second, was a compilation of verbatim remarks that included label tags, such as (BUGGER): "Gam always bugs me, he _____." Third, was a set of remarks not linked to nameable tags, but which the observation had shown represented a stereotype description. *HIAC is such a category. Fourth, remarks were divided into 21 coded categories such as Physical Description, Work Skills, Relationship between Interviewer and Subject, out-of-school activities, and Classroom Salience.

The second and third compilations were then used as a stimulus source for 60 elementary students in a third and fourth-grade class as follows: for each label, the remarks accompanying the label were read to individual students. For each label the student was asked to "name someone in his class that people would say is like this".

Out of 78 labels, students were able to immediately rec-

ognize and "know" someone in 59 cases. These 59 labels are those presented in the body of this paper.

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